

Prabuddha Bharata

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BY THE WAY

IT is seldom that the mockery of life is absolutely transparent. So many veils envelop it, and so many deceptions cast up appearances around it that it is easier to be deluded than not. But Truth has its day, though at long intervals. Then the hollowness of things is ghastly in its lurid glare. A dearly beloved sovereign laid low by the hand of death. The people overwhelmed with grief and its manifestations. And the next moment? Why they are helping in the coronation of another! One eye shedding tears of sorrow, and another lighted up with pleasure! This duality is Life.

THE harvest reaped by death in the very first month of the new century is of the richest. The greatest sovereign of the age, and if we mistake not—the longest-reigned within the memory of history—has been claimed by its scythe. The poignancy of our grief at this melancholy event is lessened by the facts of the maturity of her Majesty's age and the comparative shortness of her suffering before passing away. May the soul of the departed find rest in the All-peace!

We beg to offer our loyal sympathy to his Majesty Edward the VII., our new Emperor, in his sad bereavement. His Majesty has our hearty wishes for a long and successful career.

THE untimely death of his Highness the Maharajah of Khetri by a fall from one of the minarets of Sikandra in Agra, and that of the noted Dewan of Jeypur from pneumonia, while on Famine Commission duty at Nagpur, contribute to the gloom cast over the land. The Maharajah was in the prime of his life and possessed many princely and lovable qualities. In the death of the Dewan, India has lost one of her greatest practical Bengali statesmen, whose highest repute was absolute loyalty to the Master and the State he served. May these worthy sons of India find rest and peace in the regions they have sojourned to!

WE have yet to notice the passing away of Mr. Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade of Bombay. He was a noble specimen of the Indian of present day education and culture. Under his foster-

ing care the Indian Social Conference had been growing in health and strength every year. Quiet, moderate, but of iron determination and perseverance, Mr. Ranade's loss,—though we did not agree with all his views (vide "The Social Conference Address" in this number, being a criticism of a part of his last Lahore Social Conference Address, written before his death)—is a severe blow to the cause of Social Reform in India. May he rest in peace awhile in the realms of beatitude after his unremitting labour of years for the good of his mother-land, and come back refreshed and strengthened to the same work, like a true son of India that he was! *Hari Om Tat Sat!*

DEATH and immortality both dwell in the body. Ignorance leads to the former; truth to the latter.

—*Mahābhārata.*

The realisation of the Divine in man constitutes the most absolute and all-sufficient happiness.

—*Aristotle.*

BISHOP Welldon quoted the holy scriptures in a sermon the other day in support of the practice of vivisection and shocked the Hindus. He has since improved his position by causing misgivings and fright in their hearts. He is credited by a Calcutta contemporary to have suggested in a recent sermon, "that the time has come when the teaching of the Bible shall be made compulsory by Government in this country in all its schools and colleges." But as a palliative the Bishop added that unwilling parents might absent their children

from the Bible classes. Naturally our contemporary takes it as the thin end of the *missionary* wedge, and resolutely hopes that the Government will pay no heed to the Bishop's suggestion on the ground of their religious neutrality. The learned Bishop has evidently to learn yet the alphabets of the course of Christian missionary proselytisation. The Bible is a perfectly harmless factor in the business. The heathen knows well that it can not only not hold its own before his own ancient scriptures, but that its tenets have been exploded long ago in the countries of professed Christians. He is also quite at home with those explosives which have shattered them into shreds. Moreover he knows the tree by its fruits. He reads enough history and is in close enough touch with current events to have noticed the wide chasm which yawns between the profession and the practice—not only of the Christian as an individual,—but of the Christian as a nation. The great friend of the missionary cause in India is not the Bible—*it is Famine.*

THE new century seems big with the promise of improved relations between the rulers and the ruled in this country. A striking indication of this is furnished by the issue of the Nolan circular. It is an exceedingly happy idea bodied forth with a care, insight and fulness which will meet with universal satisfaction. The document has no savour of the superficial sop about it. It goes straight to the heart of the matter. Pointed stress is laid upon the *manner* of the behaviour of European superiors to the natives:—

"All human beings down to the lowest links of the chain, inclusive of children, are quick in tracing the source of the manners of others and above all of the superiors—when that is regulated by the head not the heart. When it proceeds from reason not from feeling it cannot please; for it has in it, if at all artificial, a show of design which repels as it generates suspicion. When this manner takes another shape, when kindness and consideration appear as of condescension, it must be felt as offensive. Men may dread but can never love and regard those who are continually humiliating them by the parade of their superiority."

WANT of space prevents us quoting more from this already famous circular. We are extremely gratified to find that the whole of it is characterized by the same thoroughness and sincerity which we meet in the part above quoted. We repeat our earnest hope that the circular will live in the memory and action of those for whom it is intended.

WHATEVER a man thinks, that he speaks; what he speaks, that he does; what he does, the fruits of that come to him.

—*Yajur Veda.*

NO work is worth doing badly; and he who puts his best into every task that comes to him will surely outstrip the man who waits for a great opportunity before he condescends to exert himself.

—*Joseph Chamberlain.*

THE Theosophists are having a jubilee

time of it this year, and several press notices are before us of their goings and doings for the last twenty five years.

NOBODY has a right now to say that the Hindus are not liberal to a fault. A coterie of young Hindus has been found to welcome, even this graft of American Spiritualism, with its panoply of taps and raps and hitting back and forth with mahatmic pellets.

THE Theosophists claim to possess the Original Divine Knowledge of the Universe. We are glad to learn of it, and gladder still that they mean to keep it rigorously a secret. Woe unto us, poor mortals, and Hindus at that—if all this is at once let out on us!

THERE are of course carping critics. We on our part see nothing but good in Theosophy: good in what is directly beneficial, good in what is pernicious, as they say—indirectly as we say: the intimate geographical knowledge of various heavens, and other places, and the denizens thereof; and the dexterous finger work on the visible plane accompanying ghostly communications to live Theosophists—all told. For Theosophy is the best serum we know of, whose injection never fails to develop the queer moths finding lodgment in some brains attempting to pass muster as sound.

MYSTICISM is the poison of character. It is the fertile parent of half-truths. Constant stifling of reason and truth constitute its soul. It is weak and weakening.

—*Q. E. D.*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

KAMINI KANCHANA

You cannot live in a sooty room without blackening your body to some extent, however cautious you may be. So, if a man, however clever and cautious he may be, lives in the company of a young woman, some carnal thought, however little, is sure to arise in his mind.

VIJOY :*—I like so much to come here, but I am not free, as I have undertaken the office of the Samaj.

Sri Ramakrishna :—You say you are not free. It is woman and wealth that enthrall creatures, and deprive them of their independence. Woman multiplies the wants of daily life, consequently the necessity for money arises, freedom of action is gone, and servitude is the only course left.

The priests in charge of Govindji, of Jeypore used to live, at first, the life of celibacy. Then they used to be so very spirited and full of fire that they refused to attend court at the call of the king, who was their master, returning him word, "Let him come here if he has any business." After some time the Raja managed to marry them and then they were all coming frequently to see

him without being asked at all,—one coming to bless him, another with sacred flowers from the altar of the divine image, for the King, the third one with *prasada* and so on. They had to have recourse to these acts as they had to meet diverse necessities of life : one day, to add rooms to their cottages, another day, to celebrate the *annaprāsana* ceremony of their sons, and another time, to meet some other social needs, and so on.

You can see for yourself what you have become by serving under others ; those of your young men who are quite learned in English and cultured after the Western model silently put up with the kicks of their masters ! Do you know what is in the background of all these humiliations and pangs of thralldom ?—It is woman.

REFERRING to a young disciple the Master said, "A change for the bad has come over his face. It seems a dark shadowy film has spread over it. All this is due to office work. There are the accounts and a hundred other different matters to attend to."

NOTE—In view of the misconstructions not unoften put upon his sayings, a word of explanation is necessary in regard to Sri Ramakrishna's favourite expression "*Kāmini Kāñchana*," (woman and wealth). Needless to state, he used it in a very general sense meaning the world with all its ties—all the influences which are at work to prevent the soul soaring Godward ; not that he taught his disciples to hate every woman or womankind in general, which can be clearly seen by going through all his teachings under this head, and judging them collectively instead of jumping to a conclusion from a stray saying. Who

has ever paid so much honour to and ennobled woman-kind as he did, whom he knew to be not only the mother but the manifestation of the Blissful Mother Divine of the Universe ? Moreover, these teachings were delivered to men struggling with their animal instincts. Had they been women, he would have, in advising them, substituted "man" for "woman".

*The wellknown Pandit Vijoy Krishna Goswami. He was a preacher of the Brahmo Samaj then. He left it later for a life of renunciation after true orthodox Hindu style.

THE SOCIAL CONFERENCE ADDRESS.

“**G**OD created the native, God created the European, but somebody else created the mixed breed,”—we heard a horribly blasphemous Englishman say.

Before us lies the inaugural address of Mr. Justice Ranade, voicing the reformatory zeal of the Indian Social Conference. There is a huge array of instances of inter-caste marriages of yore, a good deal about the liberal spirit of the ancient Kshatriyas, good sober advice to students, all expressed with an earnestness of goodwill and gentleness of language that is truly admirable.

The last part however which offers advice as to the creation of a body of teachers for the new movement strong in Punjab, which we take for granted is the Arya Samaj, founded by a Sanyasin, leaves us wondering and asking ourselves the question :—

It seems God created the Brahman, God created the Kshatriya, but who created the Sanyasin?

There have been and are Sanyasins or monks in every known religion. There are Hindu monks, Buddhist monks, Christian monks, even Islam had to yield its vigorous denial and take in whole orders of mendicant monks.

There are the wholly shaved, part shaved, the long hair, short hair, matted hair, and various other hirsute types.

There are sky-clad, the rag-clad, the ochre-clad, the yellow-clad, the black-clad Christian, and the blue-clad Mussul-

man. Then there have been those that tortured their flesh in various ways and others who believed in keeping their bodies well and healthy. There was in old days in every country the monk militant also. The same spirit and similar manifestations have run in parallel lines with the women too—the nuns. Mr. Ranade is not only the President of the Indian Social Conference but a chivalrous gentleman also: the nuns of the Srutis and Smritis seem to have been to his entire satisfaction. The ancient celibate Brahmavadinis, who travelled from court to court challenging great philosophers, do not seem to him to thwart the central plan of the creator—the propagation of species; nor did they seem to have lacked in the variety and completeness of human experience, in Mr. Ranade's opinion, as the stronger sex following the same line of conduct seem to have done.

We therefore dismiss the ancient nuns and their modern spiritual descendants as passed muster.

The arch-offender man alone has to bear the brunt of Mr. Ranade's criticism, and let us see whether he survives it or not.

It seems to be the consensus of opinion amongst savants, that this world-wide monastic institution had its first inception, in this curious land of ours which appears to stand so much in need of “social reform”.

The married teacher and the celibate are both as old as the Vedas. Whether the Soma-sipping married Rishi with his "all rounded" experience was the first in order of appearance, or the lack-human-experience celibate Rishi was the primeval form, is hard to decide just now. Possibly, Mr. Ranade will solve the problem for us independently of the hearsay of the so-called Western Sanskrit scholars; till then the question stands a riddle like the hen and egg problem of yore.

But whatever be the order of genesis, the celibate teachers of the Srutis and Smritis stand on an entirely different platform from the married ones, which is perfect chastity, Brahmacharya.

If the performance of Yajnas is the cornerstone of the work-portion of the Vedas, as surely is Brahmacharya the foundation of the knowledge-portion.

Why could not the blood-shedding sacrificers be the exponents of the Upanishads—why?

On the one side was the married Rishi, with his meaningless bizarre, nay terrible ceremonials, his misty sense of ethics, to say the least; on the other hand your celibate monks tapping, in spite of their want of human experience, springs of spirituality and ethics at which the monastic Jinas, the Buddhas, down to Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir and Chaitanya, drank deep, and acquired energy to propagate their marvellous spiritual and social reforms, and which reflected third hand, fourth hand from the West, is giving our social reformers the power even to criticise the Sanyasins.

At the present day, what support, what pay do the mendicants receive in India

compared to the pay and privilege of our social reformers? And what work does the social reformer do, compared to the Sanyasin's silent self-less labour of love?

But they have not learnt the modern method of self-advertisement!!

The Hindu drunk in with his mother's milk that this life is as nothing; a dream. In this he is one with the Westerners, but the Westerner sees no further and his conclusion is that of the Charvaka—to "make hay while the sun shines." This world being a miserable hole, let us enjoy to the utmost what morsels of pleasure are left to us. To the Hindu on the other hand, God and soul are the only realities; infinitely more real than this world; and he is therefore ever ready to let this go, for the other.

So long as this attitude of the national mind continues, and we pray it will continue for ever, what hope is there in our anglicised compatriots to check the impulse in Indian men and women to renounce all "for the good of the universe and for one's own freedom"?

And that rotten corpse of an argument against the monk, used first by the Protestants in Europe, borrowed by the Bengali reformers and now embraced by our Bombay Brethren!—the monk on account of his celibacy must lack the realization of life "in all its fullness and in all its varied experience,"—we hope this time, the corpse will go for good into the Arabian sea, especially in these days of plague, and notwithstanding the filial love one may suppose the foremost clan of Brahmans there may have, for ancestors of great perfume, if the Puranic accounts are of any value in tracing their ancestry.

By the by, in Europe, between the monks and nuns, they have brought up and educated most of the orphans, whose parents, though married people, were utterly unwilling to taste of the "varied experiences of life."

Then of course every faculty has been given to us by God for some use. Therefore the monk is wrong in not propagating the race,—a sinner. Well, so have been given us anger, lust, cruelty, theft, robbery, cheating &c., every one of these being absolutely necessary for the maintenance of social life, reformed or unreformed. What about these? Ought they also to be maintained at full steam following the varied-experience-theory or not? Of course the social reformers being in intimate acquaintance with God Almighty and His purposes, must answer the query in the positive. Are we to follow Visvamitra, Atri and others, in their ferocity and the Vashistha family in particular in their "full and varied experience" with womankind? For the majority of married Rishis are as celebrated for their liberality in begetting children wherever and whenever they could, as for their hymn singing and soma-bibing; or are we to follow the celibate Rishis who upheld Brahmacharya as the *sine qua non* of spirituality?

Then there are the usual backsliders, who ought to come in for a load of abuse,—monks who could not keep up to their ideal—weak, wicked.

But if the ideal is straight and sound, a backsliding monk is a head and shoulders above any householder in the land, on the principle, "It is better to have loved and lost."

Compared to the coward that never made the attempt, he is a hero.

If the searchlight of scrutiny were turned on the inner workings of our social reform conclave, angels would have to take note of the percentage of backsliders as between the monk and the householder; and the recording angel is in our own heart.

But then, what about this marvellous experience of standing alone, discarding all help, breasting the storms of life, of working without any sense of recompense, without any sense of putrid duty? Working a whole life, joyful, free,—because not goaded on to work like slaves—by false human love or ambition.

This the monk alone can have. What about religion? Has it to remain or vanish? If it remains it requires its experts, its soldiers. The monk is the religious expert, having made religion his one *métier* of life. He is the soldier of God. What religion dies so long as it has a band of devoted monks?

Why are protestant England and America shaking before the onrush of the catholic monk?

Vive Ranade and the Social reformers!—but oh India! anglicised India! do not forget child, that there are in this society problems that neither you nor your western Guru can yet grasp the meaning of,—much less solve!

Monasticism proceeds from religious seriousness, enthusiasm and ambition; from a sense of the vanity of the world, and an inclination of noble souls toward solitude, contemplation, and freedom from the bonds of the flesh and the temptations of the world.—*Schaff*.

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

Man is born for mutual assistance.—Seneca.

Love is the principle of existence and its only end.—Disraeli.

Love binds, love makes for oneness.—Swami Vivekananda.

THE end of the nineteenth century, christened as the "Wonderful Century" by A. R. Wallace, has been sullied by bloodshed and breaking of peace among nations. Nations have plunged themselves into wars of conquest, that the stronger may make new markets for their wares and merchandise among weaker peoples. The relentless play of man's selfish nature, but for which, the evolutionist says, the human race would have long ago ceased to exist in this world, is to-day the animating impulse of national life and activity in Europe and America. Every page of the Bible has been torn to pieces by the sharp knife of agnosticism. 'The mailed fist' has been created as the new beacon-light for humanity in the West and it is no wonder that Mr. Frederic Harrison—the apostle of the modern school of Positivism asks, "Is life growing nobler and purer?" One would hesitate to answer it in the affirmative after reading Mr. Stead's description of the awful night when the return of the City Imperial Volunteers was celebrated in London—the centre of civilisation,—the materialistic activities of which were bewailed by the great poet Wordsworth even a hundred years ago. The cause of this is not far to seek. It is the inevitable result of that great imposture called patriotism. "When I think of all the evils that I have seen about me arising from national calamities," says Count Tolstoy, "I see clearly that it is all due to that great imposture called patriotism*." To-day the

world wants the larger patriotism which regards all the world as the pathway to the City of God and all men in it as fellow-travellers wending their way to the same goal.

Fling off the sense of separateness and endeavour to realise the great truth that there is only one existence which modern science is feebly beginning to grasp. The Rishis have enjoined on us to accept all beings as our own selves and put into practice the *Tat Tvam Asi* of the Vedanta. It is the cultivation of love in our hearts that can produce in us this sense of universal oneness, as Sunder Raman said. A celebrated English poet holds that love was given to man that he shall be able to annul the self at last, that by its expansion his heart shall at last be able "to embrace within its bounds, not only men but the whole range of animated beings, aught that could breathe, aught that could feel, from the meanest protoplasm to man the lord of creation," like the heart of that noble apostle of humanity—the ideal man, the perfection of humanity,—Sakya Muni, who refused the blessings of Nirvana when he saw the poor ships of his fellow-beings' lives tossed to and fro on the stormy ocean of Samsara. Truly, the highest form of love is that which links the whole race of man into one grand universal brotherhood. Thanks to Swami Vivekananda and other disciples of that great Yogin, Sri Ramakrishna, for their noble work of holding aloft the lamp of Vedanta in the West! Every one who affirms that ideal of universal brotherhood, recently lifted before the eyes of the civilised world by the noble band of Theosophists, does something, however little, to hasten that day when nations shall cease to enslave nations and men shall

* Cf. Sir Wilfrid Lawson's definition: "In the old days a patriot was described as a person who loved his country: to-day a patriot is a man who loves somebody else's."

learn self-denial and go beyond the meshes of Maya. The task to which duty summons us with the loudest note of her bugle, our highest moral obligation, is the duty of beneficence, the duty of doing good to others. And the only thing which will produce in us this sense of brotherhood is "the recognition by us of our common source, our common destiny, our eternal association which Vedanta teaches," as our beloved Western sister Mrs. Annie Beasant writes. Undoubtedly Vedanta is the only absolute religion for

the world and it will be a happy era for mankind when every one will realise the saving truth एकमेवाद्वितीयम् of the Vedanta and be nucleated round one uninterrupted universal brotherhood.

"O Arjuna, the Yogi who casts an equal eye everywhere, looking alike on pain and pleasure, and considering all things as his own self and the happiness and the misery of others as his own, is deemed to be the best."

A. BALAKRISHNA.

THE NEW THOUGHT IN THE WEST

I

THE world at large regards the closing years of the nineteenth century as wonderful, for no age has ever witnessed such a succession of triumphs of science in so short a time: so that the effect of the cumulated wonders has been to prepare it for any revelation of science—to increase almost dangerously man's powers of belief; as it has made it harder than ever to discern and fix the true limits of natural science.

But to the Indian mind these great scientific achievements of the West hold a position of only secondary importance. There has developed out of the world-domineering Anglo-Saxon civilization and made its presence felt in the land of its birth, one supreme fact,—albeit partly due to or an indirect effect of scientific progress—which from the Indian view-point bids fair to eclipse all the other events of the century.

We refer to the new religious thought in the West.

It acquires its importance from the fact that it affords a brilliant instance of the working of the law of evolution in the domain of the mind, heralding an era of a new and expanded spiritual vision the like of which was never seen before.

But a thought that is unquestionably in advance of what preceded it is not necessarily the highest, and it will not therefore be uninteresting to see that the New Thought admits of improvements on several points and that it will have to part with many of its cherished notions in order to be able to satisfy the fullest demands of our head and heart.

Religion means the harmonious culture of the head and heart; and we should jealously guard against those forces which develop the one at the expense of the other. The New Thought contains, as will be shown presently, certain ideas which though pleasant to the emotions, appear, when brought to

the test of reason, to be confused and incoherent. Dr. Heber Newton, who voices the New Thought in a series of articles in the New York 'Mind', (to which, by the way, we shall refer to, in this and succeeding papers) unwittingly gives the reason of this confusion of ideas in his explanation of the origin of the New Thought. "The spiritual sense" (of to-day), says the Rev. Doctor, "has revolted (against the old)—*imagination discerning the Infinite Presence*". Imagination—that shallow, ephemeral crest of the mind-wave,—can it ever take a whole view of the infinite ocean of existence from which it springs, upon which it rests, and into which it finally dissolves? Infinity alone can discern Infinity. Imagination limits and distorts it.

But we believe that the theory which the Western imagination is spinning out of the distant glimpse of Truth—goaded by the irrepressible desire of finding out a solution for the riddle of life, in harmony with the ever-widening sphere of practical experience—will in the near future be shorn of its poetic superfluities by the gentle but efficient stroke of the most powerful and abiding of human faculties—the Reason.

Dr. Heber Newton says, "The universe is practically to our thought omnipotent". We do not quite see the truth of this statement. From the illustration cited in its support we only understand that everywhere there is the manifestation of a force which, measured with the standards familiar to us, is very great. He shows the immensity of the force of gravitation, and concludes by telling that it is "one of the forms of force in the universe that we may well call omni-

potent".

Now the accepted meaning of the term "omnipotent" is all-powerful, capable of doing everything. But none of the different forms of force is capable of doing everything. It is capable of doing only what it actually does. Even granting that there is no qualitative difference between the different forms of force, their quantitative difference is a fact which no one can afford to ignore. This quantitative difference at once disproves their all-powerfulness. The force which pushes a seedling up to a tree is not strong enough to hold the planets in their respective positions, nor is the latter force capable of overcoming what is drawing them away from the sun.

If the Rev. Doctor means that the force itself, and not each one of its manifestations, is all-powerful, then, as there is no other way of perceiving the presence and ascertaining the amount of a force but by the work it does (*i. e.* its manifestation), his statement amounts to the assertion that the sum total of the various forces manifest in nature is infinite. This assertion is in direct contradiction to a scientific truth, namely, that in every particle of matter there is a constant play of *two opposite forces* which alone make its existence possible. The universe would have been a non-entity if all the forces (physical or moral) tended the same way. For then there would have been no diversity, and diversity is the basic principle of the universe. As matters stand, there is everywhere the manifestation of two opposite forces. In the physical world we have the centripetal against the centrifugal, the attracting against the repulsing force, and so

on. In the moral, these opposite forces are indicated by such terms as hatred and sympathy, good and bad, right and wrong, &c.

The sum total of any two forces acting in opposition to each other, can never be greater than themselves acting in the same direction. So the summation of the forces that are manifesting themselves in nature, however great they may be when separately considered, having always some opposing force to contend with, can never be infinite.

The confusion deepens still more in the following sentence where the Rev. Doctor seeks to connect this omnipotent force with "law and order." "There is a reign of law" says he, "that is, of an omnipotent power ordering and regulating all things in heaven above, in the earth below, and in the waters under the earth." We often hear poets and preachers (and scientists too) talk of harmony and order in the universe. We often see them earnestly advocating the idea and growing warm over it. Their earnestness inspires us with the hope that we might some day be able to see things with their eyes and rescue ourselves from all "imaginary fear and trouble." But alas! every time we turn our expectant gaze towards the stern realities of nature we get doubly disappointed, and become confirmed more strongly than ever in the belief that the so-called order of the Universe is of a very poor order indeed! Things meet our eyes at every turn which do not nearly fulfil even the human ideal of order. Who does not see that upon the life-blood of some, depends the vitality of others, and the shriek of agony of the

vanquished, inebriates the victor with mad delight? Who does not see that millions are starving for want of food, before the eyes of men dying of surfeit? Who does not see that host after host of promising youths are driven daily to an untimely grave while their aged, helpless parents, who pray day and night for death are cursed to drag on a painful existence through scores of years? If these are the manifest signs of order, we do not know what disorder is. Order, when it comes from an omnipotent power, means absolute want of friction. But what is there in the universe which has not to wage unending war with its surroundings? What is allowed to grow at all without depriving its neighbours of some of their life-force?

Next the Rev. Doctor goes on to show that the universe is one organism, because we find "no such thing as dead matter in the universe." It is true that there is nothing dead in the universe, but we cannot see (unless imagination comes to our aid) that there is *one life* in it. The units composing the universe are not affected by the action of one will and do not obey the same laws of rise, growth and decay. On the contrary, we find that each organism in nature has a separate will of its own and comes into being, grows and dies without participating in the same processes with any other organism at the same time.

Again, according to the Rev. Doctor, all things are "the thoughts of a Mind capable of bringing its imaginings into perfection." This is only another way of saying that all things in the universe are perfect,—because in the *perfect mind of God* there can be no idea of im-

perfection. Perfection precludes totally the idea of progress. But is not progress—the changing of the present for a better future—the only motive power of all activities—human and other?

But it is just here that a most puzzling question crops up. The Rev. Doctor says, “things are the thoughts of the Divine Mind externalising themselves,” and that God conceived the whole universe “as a whole,” “altogether.” From these two statements it follows that the idea of Time is entirely absent in the Divine Mind—“the universe as a whole” taking in all that appear to our limited minds as the past, the present and the future. Granting that the purpose of creation is to reach perfection which, as science proves, is alone possible through time by the process of evolution, we cannot understand how the different stages of evolution come into existence. If they were present in the Divine Mind they ought to have appeared all at once, because, according to Dr. Newton, creation (which includes all that have been, are and will be) “is a thought springing within the Infinite mind.” Since this is actually not the case we are bound to admit that the idea of Time is present in the Divine Mind, *i. e.*, God has also a past, a present and a future,—a fact which thoroughly deprives Him of His omniscience and reduces Him to an ordinary mortal like ourselves.

Again, Infinity implies the idea of not being *finited* or limited by the presence of anything apart from Itself. To have a thought in the mind means to let the mind take the shape of the object thought upon. Thus, “a thought springing in the Infinite Mind” implies that

the Infinite Mind contracted or limited Itself into the shape of the object of Its thought (here the universe), or in other words, It destroyed Its own Infinity.

Even Dr. Heber Newton is afraid of pantheism ; but in his attempt to walk out of the frying pan he tumbles into the fire. To escape the danger of pantheism, the New Thought affirms a “Divine Personality inhabiting this living organism, the universe”. To save the Divine Personality from being affected by that organism it postulates the transcendence of the Divine Mind and explains itself in these words:—“As my mind can separate itself from my body, though it inhabits it now, so can God fold up this living vesture, and, as a garment it shall be changed. But He abideth, His years failing not”.

In order to keep the body alive, the ‘I’ that inhabits it, has to come down from its transcendent state and attend to its needs. In the same way, the Personality that dwells in the universe will have to pay attention to it if He wants to keep it going. Or, to continue the metaphor of the garment, the Divine Personality must have to take note of it, direct His attention to it, in order to be able to put it on or take it off. But as has already been said before, to feel the presence of anything apart from self, is to become restricted or conditioned by it. This, in the case of God, would mean the destruction of His Godhead.

ANCIENT.

Perpetually to construct ideas requiring the utmost stretch of our faculties, and perpetually to find that such ideas must be abandoned as futile imaginations, may realise to us more fully than any other course, the greatness of that which we vainly strive to grasp.—*Herbert Spencer.*

REVIEWS

ON THE THRESHOLD. Written down by "The Dreamer." Calcutta. Demy 16mo. 1900.†

This pamphlet of ninety-five pages contains extracts from the correspondence of a master to his disciple. Portions of these are some beautifully expressed truths of immense value to the spiritual aspirant—teaching as they do how best to fight and subjugate the lower nature. But the importation of a foreign element in it—foreign not to the country alone, but to the normally developed human reason too—has, we are afraid, a tendency to defeat the end in view. It would have been a happy thing indeed if the note struck by quoting the words of Buddha on page 62, "Ask not of the helpless gods.....Within yourself deliverance must be sought. Each man his prison makes," rang throughout, and "Dark powers" and "Lords of compassion" were not invited to render it jarring and discordant.

THE SAHITYA SANHITA,† a Bengali monthly, the organ of the Sahitya Sabha started in the beginning of the current Bengali year is, we are glad to note, devoted among other subjects of interest to research in the domains of the ancient *Darshanas* in particular, and the ancient culture of India in general, chief care being bestowed on the purity of style and language, the improvement of which constitutes one of its main objects. As such, the paper deserves well of the educated community of Bengal.

†Babu Aghore Nath Dutt F. T. S. 120/2 Masjid-bari St. Calcutta.

†Sahitya-Sabha, 106/1 Grey Street, Calcutta. Rs. 3 annually.

THE INDIAN REVIEW.* We withheld expression of opinion on this magazine and watched its progress with keen interest for fully one year, because we could not help being sceptical at the beginning, as to the possibility of the upkeep of a paper in India on the lines that the *Indian Review* marked out for itself, though we always wished one such started and kept up to its highest in this country. We are now extremely happy to be able to say that Mr. Natesan's paper has proved by the first year of its existence, that a first class monthly in India conducted solely by Indians, is not an impossibility. This magazine marks an epoch in the history of journalism of our country. For variety of topics it stands head and shoulders above all other monthlies in India, and its unique feature—that which has contributed chiefly to its success—is the regular engagement of the services of able and distinguished writers of the time. The conductors of the journal have evidently set their whole heart upon its success—not in the sense in which it is generally understood, but in what it *should be*,—namely, the education of the reader in pleasantly arousing his interest in useful matters by presenting before him their various phases, looked at from different stand-points. Besides political subjects, all studied and handled with an eye to their practical import, literary articles, reviews and notices of the important books published every month at home and abroad, abstracts of articles from other periodicals, educational, legal, mercantile, medical and scientific notes,

*Messrs G. A. Natesan & Co., Esplanade, Madras. Rs. 5 annually.

of great interest, adorn the pages of almost every number of the monthly. In a word, this new venture is quite a success and has fully satisfied our expectations. We have no doubt that the *Indian Review* has a long career of usefulness before it.

The printing, get up and other outward features of the journal are quite in keeping with its intrinsic merits and considering them all, the annual subscription is very moderate.

LEAVES FROM THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA .

(According to M., a son of the Lord and servant)

(Continued from page 16.)

DOCTOR:—I may be permitted to put in a word here. Buddha once ate swine's flesh. What do you think was the immediate result? Why, colic. Now the poor man took to opium as a remedy. You know what is the secret of '*nirvana*' and all such nonsense—the man remained stupified with opium, and in such a state had no sense-consciousness. This was your so-called *nirvana*.

This latest exposition of the doctrine of *nirvana* taught by Buddha gave rise to roars of laughter. The conversation went on.

THE WORLDLY MAN AND WORK WITHOUT ATTACHMENT.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Syam Basu):—Lead the life of a householder. That is by no means wrong. But take care you work without attachment with your mind always pointed to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. Suppose a person has a carbuncle on the back. Now this man talks as usual. Perhaps he attends to his daily work. But pain constantly puts him in mind of the carbuncle. In the same way although you are in the world you should turn your mind constantly to the Lord.

A woman secretly carries on an intrigue

with a lover. Live in the world like that woman. She thinks of her lover all the time she does her household duties.

(To the Doctor):—Do you follow this?

Doctor:—Having never had such feelings as those of the woman, how can I?

Syam Basu:—My dear Doctor, excuse me but you do follow a little, don't you? (laughter).

Sri Ramakrishna:—More especially as he has been in the trade for a long time. Is not that so? (laughter).

THEOSOPHY.

Syam Basu:—Sir, what do you think of Theosophy?

Sri Ramakrishna:—The long and short of the matter is that people making disciples belong to an inferior order of men. Again those that seek for powers also belong to an inferior class; such as for example, the power of crossing the Ganges on foot or that of reporting here what another person is talking about in a distant country. It is by no means easy for such people to get pure *Bhakti* (love) for the Lord.

Syam Basu:—But Sir, the Theosophists seek to put Hinduism once more on a firm basis.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Well, I am not well-

posted up in their views or doings.

Syam Basu :—Questions like the following are dealt with in Theosophy :—What regions is the soul bound for after death—the lunar sphere or the stellar mansions?

Sri Ramakrishna :—I dare say. But let me give you an idea of *my* way of thinking. Somebody asked Hanuman, the great lover of God, 'What is the *Tithi** to day?' Hanuman replied, 'My dear fellow, excuse me. I know nothing about the days of the week, the *Tithi* or the stars telling of the destiny on a particular day. That is not my line. I meditate on Rama (God) and on Rama alone.'

Syam Basu :—The Theosophists believe in *Mahatmas*. May I ask whether you hold that *Mahatmas* are real beings?

Sri Ramakrishna :—If you care to take my word for truth, I say 'yes.' But will you be good enough to let these matters alone? Do come when I am better. Do but have faith in my words, and I will see that you find peace. Don't you see I don't take either money or clothes or any other thing. In some *Jatras* (theatrical representations) respectable visitors are expected to encourage the actors by money gifts during the acting, *Here* people are not called upon to make such gifts. This is why so many come here. (laughter).

**Tithi*, the day calculated after conjunction or opposition according to the phases of the moon.

(To the Doctor) :—What I have got to say to you is this— but don't you take any offence! You have had enough of the things of the world—money, fame, lectures and so on. Now give your mind a little to God, and do come here every now and then. It is good to listen to words relating to God. Such words light the soul and turn it to God.

A short while after, the Doctor stood up to bid good-bye. But Girish came in and the Doctor was so glad to see him that he took his seat again. Girish stepping forward saluted the Lord and kissed the dust of his hallowed feet. The Doctor watched all this in silence.

Doctor :—So long as I am here Girish Babu will not be good enough to come. He would always come just as I am about to go away. (laughter).

There was then a talk about the Science Association and the lectures delivered there. Girish took an interest in these lectures.

Sri Ramakrishna (to the Doctor) :—Will you take me one day to the Association?

Doctor :—My dear sir, once you are there you will lose all sense-consciousness—at the sight of the glorious and wonderful works of God—the Intelligence shown in those works—the adaptation of means to ends!

Sri Ramakrishna :—O indeed!

(To be concluded)

WOMAN IN ANCIENT INDIA

(Continued from page 189, Vol. V.)

WHAT a noble band of women graced and illumined the ancient past of India! Would their holy memories go for nothing? No, they stand as beacon lights to the souls of their future daughters, albeit poorly and weak—to rouse in them the ambition of attaining to that high state of culture

and enlightenment. Below are the names of some of the most famous of them together with a brief account of the special characteristics and acts for which they gained celebrity in their times and were immortalised in our sacred scriptures.

(1) **GARGI**: The unmarried lady who

used to roam on Earth as a *Paramahansa*. It is clearly stated in the *Madhukanda* of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that she rose in response to the challenge thrown by the sage Yajnavalkya to the learned assembly in the court of Janaka and pierced him with the arrows of her questions.

(2) MAITRAYI: One of the wives of Yajnavalkya. At the time of his leaving the world when she was offered a part of his riches she asked him whether by that, one could attain immortality. When she heard that there was no prospect of gaining immortality by any amount of wealth, she rejected the offer and entreated her lord to teach her the way to the supreme realisation of Self which Yajnavalkya gladly explained to her.

(3) SULAVA: The daughter of the King Pradhan. She preferred to remain a virgin as she could not find a husband who could surpass her in excellence, virtue, and learning. Later, she took the vows of a *Paramhansa* and she used to move about freely from place to place, and realised the knowledge of Brahman. She once made her way into the royal court of Janaka and instructed him on Brahman and the highest duties of kings. In the *Shantiparva* of the Mahabharata we meet with the following account concerning her:—

“The nun, by name Sulava, walking alone all over the land, heard other woman-sannyasins extolling Janaka as the competent speaker and teacher on *Moksha*; but, being doubtful if all those high qualities did really belong to him, she determined to have an interview with him. Then, by yogic powers the noble lady concealed her natural appearance and took another beautiful form, and in a twinkling of the eye, as swift as the flying arrow, she of lotus-eyes and sweet brows, entered the palace of Videha. On the pretext of begging alms she saw the lord of Mithila, who welcoming her, gave her the seat of honour and

having had her feet washed, entertained her with the best food, of which she heartily partook. Then in the midst of all those masters of philosophical lore the nun spoke to the king” &c. (CCCXX: 7-15). These and the succeeding slokas to the end of the chapter, speak of her as having full mastery over the yogas, revered, majestic and perfectly self-controlled. Does not this one example—even supposing there were no others like it—afford ample reasons to those, who are not for giving the shastras into the hands of women, to ponder over the matter?

(4) KALABATI: Daughter of the king of Kashi (Benares), and disciple of the Rishi Durbâsâ. It is clearly stated in the *Brahmottarakhanda* of the Skanda purana that she was highly educated.

(5) VEDAVATI: Daughter of king Kushadhvaja. She was versed in yoga, did not marry, practised austerities and consumed her body in the end by yoga-fire. The following is related about her in the 17th sarga of the Uttarakanda of the Valmiki Ramayana: “There he saw that virgin with matted hair on her head and wearing an antelope’s skin, living in the discipline of a Rishi and radiant like a deva.” Her story is also found described in the Devibhagavata, 9th skandha, Chaps. 15th and 16th.

(6) AMBA: Without entering into the matrimonial bondage she lived the life of hard austerities and devotion. “That lady also, O King, coming to the Jamuna, entered the Ashrama and practised *tapas*, extraordinary in character &c.” (Mahabharata, Udyoga P. chap. 197).

(7, 8). VAYUNA and DHARINI: The Bhagavata (IV. chap. 1) says that “they (the two sisters) were virgin *Brahmavadinis* who completely mastered the highest knowledge in both departments: theory and practice.

(To be continued)

VIRAJANANDA.